

NOAA Web Update June 12, 2010

DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident



Situation: Saturday 12 June —

BP continues to capture some oil and burn some gas at the surface using its containment dome technique, which is being executed under the federal government's direction. After cutting off a portion of the riser, BP placed a containment device over it in order to capture oil at its source.

Response

OR&R's modeling team continues to generate daily trajectories for the nearshore and offshore surface oil. Overflights are also conducted on a daily basis (weather permitting) to provide field verification of model trajectories.

More than 25,500 personnel are currently responding to protect the shoreline and wildlife, and to clean up vital coastlines.

One of several public expos was held last night in Houma, attended by over 150 people. Health effects of dispersants, seafood impacts, and potential hurricane impacts were among the topics of concern. The next public expos are scheduled for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of next week.

Trajectories

Onshore (SE/S/SW) winds are forecast to continue into next week at speeds less than 10 knots. Persistent onshore winds have resulted in northward movement of the slick towards the Mississippi/Alabama barrier islands and the Florida Panhandle. Coastal regions in Mississippi Sound west of Freeport may continue to experience shoreline contacts throughout this forecast period. Persistent southeasterly winds are also resulting in movement of oil towards the Chandeleur Islands, Breton Sound, and the Mississippi Delta. These regions are also threatened by shoreline contacts within this forecast period.

Closures

NOAA Fisheries Service is not modifying the fishery closure in the Gulf of Mexico today. Any changes to the closure are announced daily at 12 p.m. Eastern at sero.nmfs.noaa.gov and take effect at 6 p.m. Eastern the same day.

Sea Turtles and Marine Mammals (effective June 11, 2010)

A total of 374 sea turtles have been verified from April 30 to June 11 within the designated spill area from the Texas/Louisiana border to Apalachicola, Florida. Between Thursday, June 10 and Friday, June 11, 23 turtle strandings were verified (17 dead and two live strandings from Mississippi, one dead and two live strandings from Florida, and one dead stranding from Alabama). One of the live stranded turtles subsequently died and the three others were placed in rehabilitation. There are now 48 sea turtles in

rehabilitation centers. These include 28 heavily-oiled sea turtles captured as part of the turtle search and rescue operation led by NOAA, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and other partners working under the Wildlife Branch of the Unified Command. These 28 sea turtles were scooped from the Gulf of Mexico and brought to the Audubon Nature Institute outside New Orleans for rehabilitation. A total of 42 stranded or captured turtles have had visible evidence of external oil since verifications began on April 30. These include the 34 captured turtles from the on-water operation (28 living, three collected dead and three died in rehab), four live stranded sea turtles (two caught in skimming operations) and four dead stranded sea turtles. All others have not had visible evidence of external oil.

Of the 374 turtles verified from April 30 to June 11, a total of 312 stranded turtles were found dead, 28 stranded alive. Four of those subsequently died. Four live stranded turtles have been released, and 20 live stranded turtles are being cared for at rehabilitation centers. Turtle strandings during this time period have been much higher in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and the Florida Panhandle than in previous years for this same time period. This may be due in part to increased detection and reporting, but this does not fully account for the increase.

From April 30 to June 11, 39 stranded dolphins have been verified in the designated spill area. Of these, 37 dolphins stranded dead and two stranded alive. One of those dolphins died on the beach and the other that stranded alive in Florida was euthanized. So far, two of the 39 stranded dolphins had evidence of external oil. However, we are unable at this time to determine whether the animals were externally oiled before or after death. Since April 30, the stranding rate for dolphins in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and the Florida Panhandle has been higher than the historic numbers for the same time period in previous years. In part, this may be due to increased detection and reporting and the lingering effects of an earlier observed spike in strandings for the winter of 2010.

A stranding is defined as a dead or debilitated animal that washes ashore or is found in the water. NOAA and its partners are analyzing the cause of death for the dead stranded and dead captured sea turtles and the stranded marine mammals.

Assessment

NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program (DARRP) is conducting a [Natural Resource Damage Assessment](#) (PDF, 89 K). The focus currently is to assemble existing data on resources and their habitats and collect baseline (pre-spill impact) data. Data on oiled resources and habitats are also being collected.